

Remembering

Nehemiah asks God to remember

Foundation

Bible passage: Nehemiah

He was the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes of Persia and lived a long way away from the Israel where his family had come from. But one day when he heard about how bad things were in Jerusalem, he prayed to God and asked for an opportunity to talk about it to his master, King Artaxerxes. God answered the prayer and as a result Nehemiah ended up leading people back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls. The trouble was that not everyone was happy about this and some people who lived nearby tried to stop it. When trouble arose Nehemiah prayed but he didn't just pray, he also got on with the building trusting that God would answer his prayer. Eventually when the work was finished Nehemiah returned to Persia only to come back again a few years later to sort out the ungodly behaviour of the people in Jerusalem.

Several times we read of Nehemiah asking God to remember. This might seem strange because how could God forget, but it is a common way of praying in the Bible.

Right at the start when Nehemiah heard about the terrible state of Jerusalem he remembered what he had read about in his Bible, from the books of Moses. He asked God to remember it too: “**Remember** the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’” (Neh 1.8-9) Nehemiah was asking God to remember His promises.

Later, when people opposed the rebuilding of the wall and tried to threaten Nehemiah. They accused him of trying to make himself the king of Israel, they said he was making it all up about God sending him to rebuild the walls and they tried to have him killed. But Nehemiah knew what to do - he prayed and again he asked God “**Remember** Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did (Neh 6.14) Here he was praying that God would protect them against enemies and frustrate the plans of those trying to stop the work.

“Remember me, O my God,
for good.”

Several times Nehemiah also prays that God would remember what he, Nehemiah, had done. The very last words of the book are: “**Remember** me, O my God, for good”.

Nehemiah had worked hard for God and trusted Him through difficult times. He also had reason to be proud of the things God had done through Him. We know that pride can turn into a bad thing, that puffs us up. But Jesus told a parable about God in which a master commends his servants saying to them “well done good and faithful servant”. Nehemiah seems to be a faithful servant, and his prayer reflects his desire to entrust himself and what he had done to the Lord and his desire that it be pleasing to God.



Nehemiah gives us an example of prayer, asking God to remember His promises, and our service of Him.